CLAIMS

1. A pharmaceutical composition for the treatment of neural damage comprising an effective amount of a peptide selected from the group comprising tripeptides or a dipeptides.

2. A pharmaceutical composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the peptide is selected from the group comprising (a) the tripeptide gly-pro-glu (GPE), (b) the dipeptide gly-pro, and (c) the dipeptide pro-glu.

3. A pharmaceutical composition as claimed in claim 1, and further including an effective amount of a compound that elevates the concentration of the selected peptide within the nervous system of a recipient mammal.

4. Use of tripeptides or dipeptides for the treatment of neural damage to glial cells or the treatment of neurons in mammals in the manufacture of a pharmaceutical composition suitable for administration to the nervous system of a mammal.

5. A method of treating neural damage including damage to glial cells as well as damage to neurons in mammals comprising the administration of a composition containing an effective amount of a peptide selected from the group comprising (a) the tripeptide gly-pro-glu (GPE), (b) the dipeptide gly-pro, and (c) the dipeptide pro-glu.

6. A method as claimed in claim 5 in which the peptide composition is administered within the period of from 12 hours before to 100 hours after the onset of an acute injury.

7. A method as claimed in claim 6 in which the peptide composition is administered from 0.5 to 8 hours after the onset of an acute injury, so that raised, cell-protective levels of GPE exist within the nervous system at least partly during the existence of conditions adverse to the survival of nerve cells.

8. A method as claimed in claim 5 in conjunction with an elective procedure considered likely to lead to an injury to the CNS in which an effective amount of the peptide composition is administered prophylactically prior to the elective procedure, so that raised levels of GPE exist within the nervous system during the procedure.

9. A method as claimed in claim 5 in which the dosage range of the peptide composition administered is from about 1 μg to about 100 mg of the peptide per Kg of body weight of the recipient mammal.

10. A pharmaceutical composition suitable for administration to the nervous system of a mammal said composition capable of causing the mammalian body into which it is introduced to synthesise and release elevated levels of a tripeptide or dipeptide selected from the group comprising (a) the tripeptide gly-pro-glu (GPE), (b) the dipeptide gly-pro, and (c) the dipeptide pro-glu.